

Banks are still sitting on \$1 trillion in cash. By using 7 percent of that money, there would be millions of people kept out of poverty. The banks can afford it and it would be something we seem to have lost all sight of in Congress—it would be fair. We can restart the economy by helping homeowners. We can come out of this economic crisis by putting responsible homeowners on solid ground. The map says it all. Homeowners are struggling in every district of every Member of this Congress.

We can fix this foreclosure disaster. We can help American families who play by the rules. We could start action today and help the middle class. But, no, what are we going to do? We are going to fool around out here about the rules of the EPA that protect people against toxins and mercury.

This Congress has lost its way and it needs a change. And it's going to come, because all those people who are in foreclosure in this country when the next election comes are going to ask, "What did the Republicans in the House do?" And the answer is, "Nothing."

EPA'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMPEO. Madam Speaker, I came to Washington, D.C., 9 months ago with the hope that we would restore a little bit of common sense and a whole lot of spending control to Washington, D.C. I also came to Washington, D.C., having never heard of an eco-ambassador. Now I had heard of ambassadors and I am familiar with the environment, but I had never heard of an eco-ambassador.

Indeed, I had never heard of an eco-ambassador until just a few short weeks ago when our Environmental Protection Agency that has done so much damage to our economy, so much damage to our Kansas' Fourth Congressional District, our farmers, our manufacturers, and our families, our Environmental Protection Agency decided at this time of massive Federal deficits that we needed a new program to create eco-ambassadors—eco-ambassadors, each of which will be given \$6,000 of your money, eco-ambassadors which, in exchange for that money, will come to Washington, D.C., and go back to their home places and work for 20 weeks—20 weeks for \$6,000—part-time at that—for their internship program.

When you read the requirements to be eligible to receive an eco-ambassador internship position, you will be fascinated to see that it is an ideologically driven program. Students who apply must have a strong interest in environmental justice, social justice issues, and other issues relating to environmental health disparities in health, volunteer, or employment settings. This is a liberals-only policy.

□ 1020

The Environmental Justice internship is of course administered with your taxpayer dollars. We don't need a program like this at any time; we certainly don't need it at this time.

So I have offered a bill, H.R. 2876, the EPA Student Nondiscrimination Act. It simply says that when you apply for employment with the Federal Government, we're not going to seek to find out whether you agree with this administration's radical environmental agenda. We're not going to seek to find out if you have worked as a community organizer. All we're going to ask is that you are qualified for the position.

Now, there are many efforts and many concerns about environmental disparities across the country. I share those concerns, but our EPA and our Justice Department already have many remedies for folks who feel like they have been discriminated against. What we don't need is yet another Federal program aimed at trying to solve a problem that we know can't be solved in Washington, D.C.

I'll close with this thought: this is a small program. The total dollars expended in the scale of our massive Federal deficit are very, very small; but it is symptomatic of a place, Washington, D.C., that has become completely disconnected from America and common-sense values, the values that we all have in Kansas. We don't need eco-ambassadors. We don't need this program. And I would ask my colleagues to support my legislation to eliminate it.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. It's not too late. That's my message to Palestinian Authority President Abbas, who has announced his intention to seek unilateral Palestinian statehood at the United Nations this Friday. It's not too late to abandon this reckless route, engage in direct negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, and choose the path to peace.

There is only one road to a peace agreement, and that is through direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians. This course forward is clearly outlined in the Oslo Peace Agreement, which states that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be resolved through direct, two-party negotiations. Anything outside of these direct talks—particularly this Palestinian appeal for U.N. recognition—is a dangerous digression from the known way forward.

In addition to veering from the track toward two states, a status upgrade at this time could allow the Palestinians to pursue cases against Israel in international institutions such as the International Criminal Court. Such institutions could even be used to request advisory rulings on final status issues,

further circumventing two-party negotiations.

The U.S. has also made significant investments in bolstering Palestinian security and economic prosperity, all in an effort to enable the Palestinians to make the difficult concessions necessary to move toward peace. This appeal to the U.N. and rejection of direct two-party talks directly undermines considerable American efforts and investments in a peace deal. Abbas and the Palestinians need to come back to the negotiating table, and it is the U.S. that needs to lead them back and spearhead negotiations.

As a true and steadfast friend to Israel, there has never been a more vital time for America to stand strong with our ally. With the excitement and hope of the Arab Spring has also come a great deal of uncertainty—uncertainty about the strength of the relationship between Israel and Turkey; uncertainty about the willingness of the Egyptians to hold true to their promises under the benchmark 1979 peace treaty; uncertainty about the security of the Sinai; uncertainty surrounding the speed with which Iran marches toward a nuclear bomb; and uncertainty about the number of rockets being stockpiled by Hezbollah and Hamas aimed at the homes of Israeli citizens.

But there is one thing that must never be uncertain: America's support for Israel. A threat to Israel's security or legitimacy is a threat to America, and we will not stand by and let Israel face these challenges alone. Upon her founding over six decades ago, the United States was the first Nation to recognize Israel. And since that recognition, the special bond between Israel and the U.S. has only grown stronger on the bedrock of the mutual principles of freedom, justice, and peace. Now is the time to stand with our old friend and lead the way to peace.

It is moments like these that test our mettle. It is moments like these that are recorded in our history books. And it is moments like these where we must show our leadership.

America must do everything in its power to end this perilous Palestinian bid for unilateral statehood and get direct negotiations between the two parties back on track. And President Abbas must know there will be consequences for choosing the path of confrontation over that of negotiation.

The course to unilateral recognition is not free. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process is at a pivotal crossroad. The Palestinians can choose to pursue the dead-end track toward U.N. recognition, or they can adjust their course in their wrongheaded U.N. bid and sit down at the negotiating table with Israel. The choice is theirs. It's not too late to choose the path toward peace.

CALAMITY OVER KLAMATH AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, this generation is facing spiraling electricity prices and increasingly scarce supplies. Californians have had to cut back to the point that their electricity consumption per capita is now lower than that of Guam, Luxembourg, and Aruba.

What is the administration's solution? Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced yesterday that the administration is moving forward with a plan to destroy four perfectly good hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River, capable of producing 155,000 megawatts of the cleanest and cheapest electricity on the planet, enough for about 155,000 homes.

Now, why would the administration pursue such a ludicrous policy? Well, they say it's necessary to increase the salmon population. Well, the thing is, we did that a long time ago by building the Iron Gate Fish Hatchery. The Iron Gate Fish Hatchery produces 5 million salmon smolt every year—17,000 of which return annually as fully grown adults to spawn. The problem is, they don't include them in the population count. And to add insult to insanity, when they tear down the Iron Gate Dam, we will lose the Iron Gate Fish Hatchery and the 5 million salmon smolt it produces annually.

Declining salmon runs are not unique to the Klamath. We have seen them up and down the Northwest Pacific coast over the last 10 years as a result of the naturally occurring Pacific decadal oscillation—cold water currents that fluctuate over a 10-year cycle between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. In fact, during the same decade that salmon runs have declined throughout the Pacific Northwest, they have exploded in Alaska. We are now at the end of that cycle.

The cost of this madness is currently pegged at a staggering \$290 million, all at the expense of ratepayers and taxpayers. But that's just the cost of removing the dams. Consumers will face permanently higher prices for replacement power, which, we're told, will be wind and solar.

Well, not only are wind and solar many times more expensive; wind and solar require equal amounts of reliable standby power, which is precisely what the dams provide. We're told that, yes, this may be expensive, but it will cost less than retrofitting the dams to meet cost-prohibitive environmental requirements. Well, if that's the case, maybe we should rethink those requirements, not squander more than a quarter billion dollars to destroy desperately needed hydroelectric dams. Or here is a modest suggestion to address the salmon population—count the hatchery fish.

We're told that this is the result of a local agreement between farmers and

stakeholders. Well, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that the Klamath agreement was the result of local farmers succumbing to extortion by environmental groups that threatened lawsuits to shut off their water. And obviously the so-called "stakeholders" don't include the ratepayers and taxpayers who will pay dearly for the loss of these dams.

Indeed, local voters have repeatedly and overwhelmingly repudiated the agreement and the politicians responsible for it. The locally elected Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors vigorously opposes it.

□ 1030

Finally, the administration boasts of 1,400 short-term jobs that will be created to tear down these dams. Just imagine how many jobs we could create if we tore down the Hoover Dam or Duluth, Minnesota.

Madam Speaker, amidst a spending spree that threatens to bankrupt this Nation, amidst spiraling electricity prices and chronic shortages, to tear down four perfectly good hydroelectric dams at enormous cost is insane. And to claim that this is good for the economy gives us chilling insight into the breathtakingly bad judgment that is misguiding our Nation from the White House.

The President was right about one thing when he spoke here several weeks ago. Fourteen months is a long time to wait to correct the problem. Fortunately, the administration will need congressional approval to move forward with this lunacy, and that's going to require action by this House.

Earlier this year the House voted to put a stop to this nonsense. I trust it will exercise that same good judgment as the administration proceeds with its folly.

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY TO THE UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a very, very special birthday. It is the 50th birthday of the United States Peace Corps, an incredible organization that was started by President John F. Kennedy and a whole lot of people that thought that this Nation had an opportunity to reach out to the men and women of America, provide them with a challenge: to go out to the world to seek peace, to work for peace, and to help developing nations meet their needs, whether it be in education, community development, economic development, or other activities. And so it has been.

More than 200,000 Americans, young and old, men and women, have become Peace Corps volunteers. They have served in 139 countries around the world, and today they serve in over 70 countries. It's been a terrific program.

It has presented the very best face of America to millions of people around the world.

Today, there are leaders of many countries around this world that have been taught by Peace Corps volunteers in their high schools, in their grammar schools or universities. They have a very special understanding of America. They know Americans. They know that Americans have a big heart and they have a desire to see progress, economic and social progress in every country of this world.

And so today we celebrate 50 years. We celebrate over 200,000 Peace Corps volunteers that have served around the world, and we celebrate those who have been in the administration, the directors, the country directors, the doctors, the nurses, and the others who have been part of this enormously important part of America.

As those Peace Corps volunteers have returned to America, it is now clear in recent polling that they have continued to serve. They serve as volunteers at twice the rate of other Americans. And they are found in the schools, they are found in the community programs, and they're even found in Congress, as strange as that might seem. But, nonetheless, they've served in many, many ways, and they continue to do so.

Earlier today, I met two Peace Corps volunteers who were in the very first effort in Tanzania, then Tanganyika. They returned some 40 years later. I'm going to turn that around. They actually served in Afghanistan in the early sixties and then came back 40 years later to serve once again as Peace Corps volunteers.

And what we have found over these many years, that once you've become a Peace Corps volunteer, you never stop laboring for peace, wherever it may be. And so today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of a remarkable idea that was put forward by President John F. Kennedy, the idea that Americans could reach out to the whole world and serve wherever that need might be.

Happy birthday, Peace Corps.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND A PALESTINIAN STATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. I, too, want to send my happy birthday out to the Peace Corps, and certainly it's a great day to celebrate that birthday.

Madam Speaker, what we are seeing at the United Nations this week is a brazen rejection of the basic principle of a negotiated peace. Tomorrow, Mahmoud Abbas will deliver a speech